

The Mercy of God Almighty, Part 10 - Romans 9:30-33 – September 16th, 2012

- Today's teaching will be part 10 of a series titled; "The Mercy of God Almighty." With it we complete both our series and study of Romans 9.
- To say that the best has been saved for last would sort of be an understatement, in that we are about to deal with a very important issue.
- Actually, the passage before us has the propensity to, once and for all, answer the question of whether or not our good works really matter.

William Newell - We here have a most remarkable passage, full of the deepest consolation on the one hand, and warning on the other.

- Throughout our study of this chapter, the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, has answered a myriad of questions pertaining to our lives today.
- As we end the chapter, Paul will get down to the nitty gritty, if you will, and address the matter of whether we can earn our way to heaven.

- As one commentator so aptly says it, "realizing he's a sinner unable to earn his way into the kingdom, the Gentile enters the kingdom solely by faith. The Jew, on the other hand, attempted righteousness by the law and failed because the law cannot save man"

- The problem is, this jammed the gears of the Jews by virtue of how they pursued righteousness vis-à-vis the law instead of simply by faith.
- In other words, they tried to obtain a salvation by works, under the banner of the law thinking that they could somehow be good enough.
- Enter verses thirty through thirty-three and the question of whether or not we can earn salvation, or earn more of God's love and mercy.

Can works obtain more of God's love and mercy (Verses 30-33)

(30) What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; (31) but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. (32) Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." (33) As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

- v30-31 Paul asks what shall we say, Gentiles, who didn't pursue righteousness obtained it by faith but Israel didn't attain it pursued a law?
- v32 He goes on to ask, why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works and stumbled over the "stumbling stone."
- v33 He says as it is written, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and fall, and those who trust in Him will never be put to shame.

- By the way, this should explain why many Jews today do not accept Jesus as the Messiah; they're still trying to keep the letter of the law.
- It's for this reason that so much of New Testament scripture is devoted to clarifying the role of the law, namely, what the law cannot do.
- One such passage is found in Paul letter to the churches in Galatia, where he explains how the law works in bringing us to Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:24 KJV Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

- This is why Paul says what he says about the "stumbling stone," and how that it would cause the Jews to stumble and fall, thus rejecting it.
- This stumbling stone, or block, if you prefer, that stumbles the Jews is none other than the person of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:23 NIV but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,

- Right about now, you may be thinking that salvation by grace, through faith, is a firm grasp of the obvious, and I'm preaching to the choir.
- However, if you really think about it the average person, and I'd venture to say some Christian's still believe that good people go to heaven.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that even after one comes to Christ, they're still prone to think that being good Christians gets us there.

Galatians 3:1-3 NIV You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. (2) I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? (3) Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a moment as I attempt to answer a commonly asked question related to salvation by grace through faith.
- Namely, What does it mean to be saved by grace? To answer this, I'll need to first read what Paul writes to the Ephesian church in 2:8-9.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—(9) not by works, so that no one can boast.

James 2:17-18 NIV In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

James 2:26 NIV As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Hebrews 4:2 NIV For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

K.P. Yohannan in "Living by Faith not by Sight" illustrated it beautifully this way; "...There's a chemistry to take place. For example, when hydrogen is mixed with oxygen in the presence of heat, a chemical reaction takes place and water is produced. Two separate elements, when combined, yield an entirely different result than if they were never mixed. This is true in life as well. There's a chemistry that needs to occur in our lives in what we see, hear and know being mixed with faith. You may have needs or promises from God, but if they are never mixed or combined with the element of faith, you will never see the reaction take place to bring those to fruition.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Romans 5:12 ... just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 10:9-10 ...if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."